

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT

Scott Press Release



P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • (517) 373-7748

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Senator Martha G. Scott
(517) 373-7748

SENATOR SCOTT SPONSORS WATER QUALITY BILL TO MAKE POLLUTERS PAY

(LANSING)---State Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park) today announced legislation that will fight pollution and strengthen Michigan's water quality monitoring system. Scott made the announcement at an afternoon press conference with her Senate colleagues in Lansing.

Scott's bill, Senate Bill 253, is part of a Senate/House package of bills that address National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. According to the federal Clean Water Act of 1972, facilities that discharge pollutants directly into the nation's lakes and rivers must obtain water pollution permits. Currently, the state subsidizes this permit program and businesses pay no application fee. Senate Bill 253 establishes an application fee of \$1,000.

"Michigan can no longer afford to give businesses that pollute our waters a free ride," Scott said. "Administering this federal pollutant discharge program costs the state money in

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terms of workers assigned to the program and application processing expenses. In these straitened economic times, it only makes sense that the business community step up to the plate and support this worthwhile program.”

Michigan is one of only two Great Lakes states that charges nothing for these water pollution permits. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality states that administering the program will cost \$7.2 million in fiscal year 2004.

Senate Bill 253 is part of a four-bill Senate package. The other bills would create financial incentives to encourage companies to either reduce or eliminate pollution. Charging a fee for NPDES permits was one of the recommendations of the Senate Great Lakes Conservation Task Force’s 2002 final report—***The Citizens’ Agenda . . . An Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes***. Senate Democrats also introduced these bills during the last legislative session, but they were never scheduled for committee consideration.

“This legislation is extremely important to the health of our waterways and deserves immediate consideration,” Scott said. “This is a golden opportunity for us to ensure that a program designed to protect our environment maintains a stable source of funding into the future. I hope to see these bills quickly signed into law.”

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